

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for identifying a gene which may be involved with the presentation of diabetic nephropathy, which method comprises

culturing mesangial cells in a medium in the presence of **exogenously added** transforming growth factor  $\beta$ 1 (TGF- $\beta$ 1) and a concentration of glucose sufficient to induce differential expression of a gene susceptible to such differential expression; and identifying the gene so induced by suppression subtractive hybridization.

2. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the mesangial cells are cultured in the presence of a concentration of glucose sufficient to induce up-regulation of a gene susceptible to such up-regulation.

3. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the concentration of glucose is greater than 5 mM.

4. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the mesangial cells are subjected to mechanical strain.

5. (cancelled)

6. (currently amended) ~~A method according to Claim 1~~ **A method for identifying a gene which may be involved with the presentation of diabetic nephropathy, which method comprises**  
culturing mesangial cells in a medium in the presence of transforming growth factor  $\beta$ 1 (TGF- $\beta$ 1) and a concentration of glucose sufficient to induce differential expression of a gene susceptible to such differential expression;  
and identifying the gene so induced by suppression subtractive hybridization, wherein the possibility of differential expression due to hyperosmolarity is excluded.

7. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the gene so differently expressed is a gene of SEQ ID NO:1.

8. (withdrawn) Use of a gene identified by a method according to Claim 1, as a diagnostic marker for the progression and presentation of diabetic nephropathy.

9. (withdrawn) Use of a gene identified by a method according to Claim 1, as an index of disease activity and the rate of progression of diabetic nephropathy.

10. (withdrawn) Use of a gene identified by a method according to Claim 1, as a basis for identifying drugs for use in the prevention and/or therapy of diabetic nephropathy.

11. (currently amended) An isolated ~~gene~~ **nucleic acid** encoded by a sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.